



# Friends of the Hurtwood

Administrators to the public rights of access to some 3000 acres of land in the parishes of Albury, Cranleigh, Ewhurst and Shere.

Registered Charity 200053

Spring  
2019  
No.49

## Friends Newsletter



Chairman's Letter

### Dear Friends

#### Our new tractor

Readers of the Autumn Newsletter will recall that the Land Trust has appointed FotH as Access Manager for Bookhurst Wood. In addition to this wood in Cranleigh, our operations now cover public access areas in Blackheath, Farley Green, Shere, Peaslake and Holmbury. At their meeting in December, the directors agreed that our current tractor – essentially a yard machine and only six years old - was not best suited to the increase in road work that will result. Given a generous part-exchange allowance (and the payments which the Land Trust will make to us), the decision was taken to upgrade to a more roadworthy and robust machine which will enable us to undertake more work 'in house'. The model chosen not only comes equipped with cab and axle suspension, but it also has the latest specification including visible trailer hitches for more efficient working and compliance with the latest emission standards. We anticipate taking delivery sometime before April.

#### Plans for 2019

Turning to work scheduled for the coming year, the Holmbury Hill Fort has again become very overgrown. We have recently concluded negotiations with Historic England to allow us to undertake clearance work in the Spring, which could well be a first test for the new tractor.

Work is underway on a new bike trail on Pitch Hill, designed to divert bikers off the bridleway from the Graveyard to Peaslake centre. The new trail will have a safe exit south of Walking Bottom car park; other exits into the car park will be closed. We are grateful to members of the biking community for volunteering their time to undertake this project.

During the year we hope to have FotH stands at two big local events a) the Albury Produce Fair in July and b) Peaslake Fair on August Bank Holiday. The organisers make substantial donations to FotH from the event proceeds so we are seeking volunteers to help them (see Diary and later article).

#### Annual meeting and directors

Finally I should remind everyone that our annual meeting takes place at the Duke Of Kent School on Thursday April 18th at 7 for 7.30pm. At this meeting, Friends have the opportunity to propose directors. It is great news that we have a new director, Alex Mackinnon, who the directors co-opted in December, who will be responsible for the internet and social media.

This year we are seeking to appoint an additional director with experience of fundraising who would be responsible for organising events designed to raise the visibility of FotH in the local community and increase our cash flow. To discuss this opportunity please contact me on 01306 730396 or email [chairman@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk](mailto:chairman@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk)

**Peter Copping, FotH Chairman**

### Friends of the Hurtwood

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### Ranger's report

#### Fly tip

I always try to make my Ranger's news as positive as possible, but I must confess I'm struggling slightly for this issue having just spent the best part of the day clearing up some one else's rubbish. Dare I raise the subject again, but fly tipping is on the increase with seemingly much larger quantities in each occurrence. Despite having the tractor to help with the bulk of the materials, there always is an inevitable amount of manual handling to try and clear up the area, especially when broken glass is involved.

Later this month we will be taking delivery of our new tractor which has a new feature, the ability to accurately weigh anything it picks up in the grab. It will be most interesting to see exactly what weight of fly tip we are dealing with each month. I'm hoping that armed with some accurate measurements, we may start to gain some leverage with Government bodies in the hope that the matter starts to be taken seriously. Can I please urge anyone who reads this and finds themselves in the position that they need some rubbish removed from their home, please, please do only use an authorised contractor with a waste disposal licence. It is now an offence to do otherwise and a homeowner will be liable for prosecution if the rubbish is traced back to them.

The winter, though a bit wet at times, on the whole hasn't proved too significant in terms of damage to the trees or ground. The major forestry work has finished for the time being and seemed to miss the worst of the wet weather, which meant we didn't suffer the damage to the fire roads that we'd had in the past. There will still be some hand cutting and hard wood thinning taking place on Holmbury Hill but not on the scale seen before.





### Watch out for contractors

Whilst I'm on the subject of contractors working on the Hurtwood, could I please urge all our visitors to heed any warning signs whilst they're out. We put the signs out whenever any work is taking place that requires you to be vigilant. We have had various incidents in the past when people simply have taken no notice of the signs, resulting in some very close near misses. If you see a sign out, please stop and look to see where the workers are, make eye contact if possible and they will acknowledge you and let you know if it's safe to pass.

### Holmbury Hill

Right, on to to more positive matters.... work is continuing on cutting back the main rides on Holmbury Hill, and by the time you read this, we should have made a start on a major project to clear the Holmbury Hill Fort of all the young rhododendron and birch regrowth.

We plan to clear the whole area within the ditch and banks. Last year we tried to secure a grant to cover the costs, but our application was unsuccessful due to high demand so we have decided to pay for the project ourselves using part of our Legacy funds (for which, as ever, many thanks). Once the area has been cleared using a mixture of mechanical forest mulcher and hand clearing, we should be left with a good flat surface. Not only will all the regrowth be cut down but also all the old rotten stumps left over from the original clearance nearly 15 years ago. The planned new level surface will be suitable for our own mower to cut the area, either once or twice a year. Hopefully this will keep it clear of shrubby growth and it will eventually become grass.



We are very lucky to have three scheduled monuments on the Hurtwood, with the Holmbury Iron Age Hill Fort being, arguably the most prominent. It would be nice to make more of a feature of it and show it off so that everyone can see it more clearly. Any work done on scheduled monuments has to be authorised by Historic England, the government body

charged with safeguarding our ancient monuments. Working with them can be time consuming and a long process but we have now negotiated the way forward and work should be completed by late spring.

### Mountain bikers

We now have a small group of mountain bikers who are very keen to put something back into the area they love riding in. Their main focus is, where possible, to reduce conflict with the other users. This mostly entails ensuring that the exits of the bike trails are modified to slow the rider down before they come onto any paths used by other users. They have also started work on a new bike trail that will divert riders away from the tarmac road that leads to the Cemetery in Peaslake. Currently bikers have to negotiate a quite steep and difficult route so the easy option is to use the road. Hopefully once the new trail is finished it will reduce the number of riders going past the church.

### Walking Bottom

Later this spring we will also be working on the surface of Walking Bottom car park to try and reduce the volume of sand and debris that washes onto the road after heavy rains. This will entail raising the surface and altering the camber of the exits so we can divert the water into the ditches before it reaches the road. But it all depends on the weather....

**Mark Beaumont**

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## DIARY DATES FOR 2019



**SUNDAY**  
**7th APRIL**

**MABAC** running event on Winterfold Forest



**THURSDAY**  
**18th APRIL**  
**7 for 7.30pm**

**FotH ANNUAL MEETING**  
Duke of Kent School, Peaslake Road, Ewhurst



**SATURDAY**  
**29th JUNE**  
**10am-5pm**

**CRANLEIGH PARADE & CARNIVAL**  
Cranleigh Common. Road Closures



**SATURDAY**  
**6th JULY**  
**4.30-10.30pm**

**HOLMBURY MIDSUMMER PARTY**  
Holmbury Village Hall



**SATURDAY**  
**20th JULY**  
**9.30am-1pm**

**EWHURST BIG DAY OUT**  
Hurtwood Polo Club



**SATURDAY**  
**20th JULY**  
**2-5pm**

\* **ALBURY PRODUCE SHOW**  
Albury Heath Sports Ground



**SUNDAY**  
**21st JULY**  
**2-8PM**

**ALBURY MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
Albury Heath Sports Ground



**MONDAY**  
**26th AUGUST**  
**(Bank Holiday)**  
**1-4.30pm**

\* **PEASLAKE FAIR**  
Peaslake Village. Road Closures



**SATURDAY**  
**2nd NOVEMBER**

\***HOLMBURY BONFIRE & FIREWORKS**  
See their website for details nearer the time



**SUNDAY**  
**17th NOVEMBER**

**MABAC** running event on Farley Heath

\* - The organisers of these events give generous donations to FotH. Please support them. See page 6 for details of how you can help out on the day

## Amanda Cobbett – textile artist

### In the first of a series on artists and craftspeople round the Hurtwood, Sarah Copping introduces us to the inspiration and work of Amanda Cobbett

Amanda is a textile artist based in Peaslake. Using a domestic sewing machine, she creates 3-dimensional embroideries of fungi, bark, moss and lichen. These beguiling and unique pieces are constructed from layers of thread, papers and silks, which are then embellished and mounted in bespoke perspex curiosity boxes for display.



Dubbing her twice-daily walk through the Hurtwood as her 'daily commute', it is here that Amanda finds her inspiration

and precious time for working through ideas and problems. 'I'm looking for anything – it could be the moss on the ground, tree bark, fungi or even the sound of the birds in the trees'. Scouring the woodland floor seeking its hidden treasures, she is an expert at finding fungi in the most unexpected places.

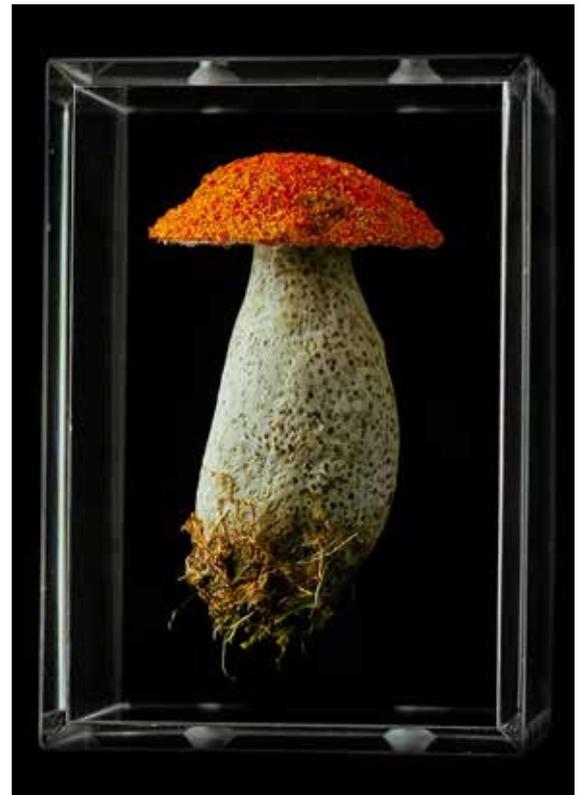
She photographs them and records their location with a grid-reference which, together with the Latin name, is provided on the sale documentation, adding to the provenance of the final piece. Often, she finds lichen and moss-laden twigs strewn across her pathway

and these are gathered up and taken back to the studio where she immediately gets to work with her sewing machine.

Using an embroidery hoop and colourful, often iridescent threads, she begins drawing with the needle into dissolvable fabric, building layer upon layer to create a new fabric that she moulds into unbelievably realistic textile copies of the natural world. Her aim is to capture the essence of how they looked in situ and, to this end, she uses a pyrography tool, burning into the fabric to give the impression of decay along the stem.

Amanda calls her pieces 'preservations' - whilst studying textile design at the Chelsea College of Art (UAL), she had the opportunity of visiting the Natural History Museum to see Captain Cook's illustrations from his first voyage. It was whilst looking at his beautiful copperplate sketches that she was captured by the idea of preserving the memory of something for the future.

A visit to the Mycology Department at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew sealed her fate - here she found an underwhelming collection of shrivelled mushrooms, their beauty and colour lost forever. She was struck by the idea of making sculptures that looked like realistically preserved originals. However, it wasn't until she took a break from her career in commercial textile design, together with the gift of an old Bernina sewing machine, that she was able to start experimenting with design ideas.



Recently, Amanda started to further develop her techniques to encompass bark, moss and lichen, which she exhibited for the first time at the 2018 RHS Art & Plant Fair in London. The response to her work was overwhelming. 'For someone to be amazed by the fact that my creations are embroidered and not real, gives me such a thrill' she says. Both Amanda's grandmothers were great seamstresses and her grandfather was a talented engineer who could take a 2D picture and make it into a 3-dimensional object without hesitation, a skill that Amanda has inherited. She finds it easy to visualise in 3D and takes great pleasure in the process. 'To take something flat and make it into something that is 3-dimensional is why I love what I'm doing.' Her work brings to people's attention the beauty and diversity that exists in the hidden under-storey of the forest floor.

In recent history, embroidery has been dismissed as a craft or, at best, a minor art, but it is finally being given the recognition and accolade that this labour-intensive technique deserves. Major art galleries around the world now include embroidery and textile art by both men and women within their collections, highlighting and promoting this increasingly contemporary art-form.

For the last 5 years, Amanda has exhibited her work at exhibitions, art fairs and galleries around the UK and overseas and has collectors of her work worldwide. In 2012, her first year of exhibiting this style of work, she was runner up of the Surrey Artist of the Year award. She has been featured on television as well as in newspapers and publications - most recently in the prestigious Gardens Illustrated magazine last November.



This year, for the first time, she will be exhibiting her work at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show from 21-25 May. You can see it at East Avenue, Stand EA508.

**For more information, and to get news and updates from Amanda, visit [www.amandacobbett.com](http://www.amandacobbett.com)**

**FotH ANNUAL MEETING  
18TH APRIL  
DUKE OF KENT SCHOOL**

**The Annual Meeting is set for Thursday 18th April, 7.00 for 7.30. Apologies for it being so close to a holiday weekend but we have an arrangement on dates with the Duke of Kent School and that's when Easter is this year.**

**Before the meeting starts, Handa Bray is again generously providing a glass of wine and nibbles to Friends so we can get together and catch up with news on and off the Hurtwood.**

**Apart from the usual AGM business (which is set out in accompanying papers) two informal groups will meet after the annual meeting ends – a walkers group chaired by Mark Beaumont and a bikers group chaired by David Clifford. Nothing formal, but a chance for everyone interested to talk about what's going on and what changes you'd like to see.**

### **Great British Summer Traditions....**

If you're reading this, you're probably already donating the funds which keep the Hurtwood alive as the glorious unspoiled countryside where we walk, ride and bike. But can we ask one more thing?

FotH are indebted not just to generous people making personal donations, but also to a small number of local charities and organisations which run community events and make donations from out of their proceeds (see the Diary). Like the Hurtwood itself, these events are part of our country life and help to make this part of Surrey such a great place to live.

Among the events that fund us are the ever popular Albury Produce Show on 20th and the bustling Peaslake Fair on 26th August. In turn, they ask FotH to help keep their events going by providing some helpers on the day.

PLEASE can you spare no more than 2 hours on 20 July or 26 August to help out? This might be taking money at the 'gates' on Albury Heath or helping organise parking at Peaslake - not strenuous and chairs can be provided if needed. You'll not only help the events and the Hurtwood, but have some fun too!

**Please contact Zoe Horton on [administration@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk](mailto:administration@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk) or on 07939 114059 – and thank you.**

## Bikers' notes

Winter is a hard time on the trails, and also hard for building and maintenance. We have continued working on the end of Super Nova where it exits on the fire road near Walking Bottom car park, in an attempt to reduce the walker/rider conflict. We hope to have some large logs to mark the trail end permanently.

An old trail has been reopened to join onto the Graveyard Trail, from the top of the Zig Zags, which will keep riders off the fire road and make a nice long trail. The bottom end of the Graveyard Trail is also getting a makeover and hopefully by the summer will bring you out in the car park next to the pond. This should keep riders away from the cemetery which has been a conflict point with village residents, who naturally prefer a quiet peaceful environment. This will make a great trail from the top of the zig zags right down to the car park all in one.

We will be doing some maintenance on Yoghurt Pots, which runs from south of the ramparts of Holmbury Hill Fort through to five ways cross-roads, in the near future as well.

**David Clifford**

**david@peaslakebroadband.net**



## FotH WEBSITE:

**www.friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk**

As noted in the Chairman's letter, the request in the last newsletter for someone knowledgeable about the internet and social media has struck gold!

Alex Mackinnon has been co-opted as a director and a steering group, made up of Alex, Mark Beaumont and me, has been formed to re-invigorate the website and integrate it with a stronger Friends of the Hurtwood presence on social media including Facebook and Instagram.

Do let us know if there's anything you'd like us to feature or promote.

**Sue Darling, Editor**

**communications@friendsofthehurtwood.co.uk**

## Lasting legacies

If the Hurtwood has meant a lot to you during your life, please consider making FotH a beneficiary of your will so that future generations can enjoy this beautiful expanse of heath and forest as well.

Making a will is normally quite straightforward – and we should really all have one, duly signed and witnessed. If you already have a will, it is even easier to add a legacy to the Friends in a codicil.

Legacies are a brilliant way of giving something back after years of pleasure in the Hurtwood, and we'll be happy to discuss any requests for how your bequest might be used. (Contacts on the front page).

